

CALVARY CONTENDER ARTICLES

December 18, 2000 (Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org) - The following information is from recent issues of the Calvary Contender. Jerry Huffman is the editor of this bi-weekly paper. The full issues are available on the web at <http://home.hiwaay.net/~contendr> --

'LEFT BEHIND' FILM LEFT OUT GOSPEL -- Left Behind is the most expensive Christian film ever made. It is based on a popular series of books by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, and due for release to movie theaters nationwide in February. Those who made the film desire that it be used as an evangelistic tool to reach people for Christ. A pastor friend has viewed the video, said some positive things about it, but has some concerns. He says that in depicting worldwide post-Rapture chaos (plane crashes, car accidents, etc.) the film greatly overestimates the number of true believers in the world, and that one could get the impression there are MANY on the road to life (Jesus says FEW are). He says the movie emphasizes repeatedly that all infants and children (even of unsaved parents) will be removed from the earth, but points out that a one-year-old at the time of the rapture would be eight at the time Christ returns to earth to rule and reign--plenty old to be saved then or prior. He says some of the music is horrible--"Christian rock" of the worst kind. But the most serious problem of all is that the GOSPEL is sadly missing in this supposedly evangelistic tool. The name of Christ is mentioned only three times (during about a one-minute segment). There is no mention of the Cross, the empty tomb, no emphasis on the sinfulness of man and no clear presentation of the terms of salvation. Lastly, this pastor is concerned that the film will bring thousands of professing Christians into secular movie houses. Be warned, be wise, beware! (Calvary Contender, Dec. 15, 2000).

GLORIA COPELAND SAYS WE DESERVE WEALTH -- Gloria (Mrs. Kenneth) Copeland is known for her heretical Word-Faith theology. We quote from a review of her new book (12/00 Charisma): "Tethered to the belief that God's people deserve wealth, real estate and financial abundance, the author asserts that if those are not manifest in our lives, we are not doing the Word but reaping poor choices previously sown. Touching briefly on the law of progressive increase, Copeland confirms that little by little our obedience to God will prosper us financially, spiritually and emotionally. It is this prosperity that moves us from simply obtaining personal wealth to using that wealth to advance God's ultimate plan." This is false teaching. We are sinners, undeserving of even the least of His mercies (Calvary Contender, Dec. 15, 2000).

BRAZIL'S CATHOLICISM, SPIRITISM -- Of Brazil's 170 million, 130 million are Roman Catholics. Or, are they? Many will go to their Catholic Mass on Saturday and their Spiritist meeting on Tuesday. Many have been charismatics and when offered the gospel they will say yes, and will just add that to the other things they already have (12/4 Christianity Today). Brazil is considered the largest Roman Catholic country in the world, but a Presbyterian pastor says, "Brazil is a Spiritist country, not a Catholic country." There are over 14,000 Spiritist centers in Brazil. Spiritist worship takes two forms: Lower Spiritism that came with African slaves (voodoo, witchcraft, magic, etc.). The other is popular with upper-class folks, and has a New Age kind of emphasis (reincarnation, talking with dead). Catholicism seems compatible with various other false-gospel, syncretistic religions (e.g., Santeria, voodoo) (Calvary Contender, Dec. 15, 2000).

ROME ASSERTS PAPAL AUTHORITY -- The Vatican, in its recent Dominus Iesus document (see 10/1 & 15 CCs), declared Catholicism the sole path to salvation and claimed that Peter and his successors were commissioned by Jesus to rule the church (12/00 Proclaiming the Gospel). It said no one can "interpret Sacred Scripture outside the Tradition and Magisterium of the [RC] Church." By declaring that bishops have sole authority to interpret Scriptures, the Vatican supplants God's authority with its own authority (Calvary Contender, Dec. 1, 2000).

CATHOLIC SHROUD A FRAUD -- Catholics, Mormons, and charismatics put great emphasis on signs and visions (see Matt. 12:39). The Catholic Shroud of Turin has been debated since it first surfaced in 1357 AD. Scientific evidence continues to mount that it is one of the greatest art frauds in history. Scientists from Oxford and Cambridge universities have called it a fake and dated it around 1350 AD (see 10/15/88 CC). Bandaging was the custom for burial in Jesus' day. John 19:40 says Jesus' body was "wound" in linen clothes

(plural), and 20:7 states that His head was covered with a napkin, not a shroud. The local bishop when it was first exhibited in 1357 called the Shroud a fraud, based on the testimony of the artist who made it. We believe the Shroud is as phony as the twentieth-century Catholic visions of Mary (Calvary Contender, Dec. 1, 2000).

MOON MOVING TO BRAZIL -- Billionaire cult leader Sun Myung Moon, the self-proclaimed second coming of Christ, has become disappointed at the American public's refusal to worship him and is moving to Northern Brazil. His Family Federation for World Peace recently joined with Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam to sponsor a Million Family March on Washington, D.C. (Calvary Contender, Dec. 1, 2000).

OLD GOSPEL VS. NEW -- Rev. Gary Gilley says the new gospel is based on flawed philosophy (felt-needs) and misguided methodology (market-driven), and that it ultimately crystallizes into a mutated gospel of self-esteem and personal fulfillment (9-10/00 Voice). He adds: The old gospel was about an offended God; the new gospel is about a wounded us. The old gospel was about sin, the new gospel is about needs; the old gospel was about our need for righteousness, the new gospel is about our need for fulfillment. The old gospel is offensive to those who are perishing; the new gospel is attractive. Many are flocking to the new gospel but it is altogether questionable how many are actually being saved. What we need in our churches is not a therapeutic, altered gospel that mirrors the spirit of the age, but rather the courage to become relevant by preaching the foolishness of the cross (Calvary Contender, Nov. 15, 2000).

WILLOW CREEK & WOMEN PASTORS -- Bill Hybels' Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago years ago decided "after months of study and debate" that it would support women in any position of leadership--teacher, preacher, elder. The church's theological guru and founding elder, Wheaton College professor Gilbert Bilezikian, argues that "secular socialization regarding sex roles," whereby men are cut out for certain tasks and women for others, has no place in a Christian community (11/13 Christianity Today). The church has garnered criticism because it requires that a potential member be able to "joyfully sit under the teaching of women teachers" and "joyfully submit to the leadership of women in various leadership positions at Willow Creek before joining. A female elder said, "...if you can't embrace this teaching, practically speaking, you'd probably be happier at some other church." Bilezikian is said to enjoy a glass of red wine with his meal ["Dr.'s orders!"], and has "legions of female followers." Perhaps not surprisingly, "Women at Willow Creek fall in love with him...." Such is the man behind Bill Hybels' seeker-sensitive megachurch ministry (Calvary Contender, Nov. 15, 2000).

MOODY RADIO PASTOR HAS BAD ADVICE ON CATHOLIC BELIEFS -- A listener asked Moody Radio Pastor Don Cole for "biblical justification" for nuns, purgatory, confessing to a priest, and worshipping the Virgin Mary. Cole's reply was that each of these is a Catholic belief or practice and said he could not speak for the Roman Catholic Church. He said he included the question "to make two points: that treatment of Roman Catholic doctrine by some Protestants is not always accurate, and that it is unfair for us Protestants...to do a monologue about somebody else's beliefs." Dave Hunt (10/00 The Berean Call) says Moody should be held accountable, and asks: "Would Cole give the same response if asked about Mormons or Jehovah Witnesses?" He said that treatment of RC doctrine by some Protestants is doubtless true, but hardly an excuse for Cole himself not to give an accurate and biblical appraisal. Hunt went on to show the absurdity of calling it "unfair" to "monologue about somebody else's beliefs." Truth is, Cole has long had a weakness toward Catholicism. In 1989 (What In the World) he is quoted as saying, in response to the question "Should we accept Catholics as fellow Christian brothers and sisters in Christ?" that: "I personally accept as brothers or sisters in Christ all who acknowledge Jesus as Lord....I love and respect many Catholic Christians...." Multitudes are deceived today by Romanism's false doctrines while Cole, MBI and others refuse to give a clear warning, and criticize those who do (Calvary Contender, Nov. 1, 2000).